

Gorbachev Voices 'Alarm' At Lithuania's Declaration

Political Solution Sought; Force Ruled Out

By David Remnick
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VILNIUS, U.S.S.R., March 12—Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev today described the Lithuanian parliament's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union as "alarming" and told the Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow that the decisions being taken in Lithuania "affect the fundamental interests and destiny of the republic itself, of the people and of our entire state."

Despite the worried tone of Gorbachev's comments, the Soviet leadership again signaled it would pursue negotiations and not use military might to halt the independence drive by the Baltic republic. That message came from Gorbachev's chief conservative rival, Yegor Ligachev, who today ruled out the use of force, saying: "We must resolve this by political means. Tanks will not help in this matter."

But even as Kremlin officials were voicing their concern about Lithuania, an artist working outside the doors of the republic's legislature here was putting the final touches on the new state seal of St. George where once a Bolshevik hammer and sickle had been.

The Lithuania revolution, led by a soft-spoken professor of music named Vytautas Landsbergis, has been a two-year pursuit—in a quiet, almost scholarly way—of a singular goal. It is typical of the reserved spirit of the parliamentary rebellion here that on the morning after the most historic challenge ever to Moscow's control of a republic, there were no demonstrations, no mass celebrations.

"That is our style. But inside we all feel a little reborn," said Landsbergis, a founder of Sajudis, the informal independence movement that began in June 1988 and now holds more than two-thirds of the seats in the Lithuanian legislature.

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■ The Communist Party Politburo in Mongolia has resigned. Page A14

Despite the parliament's dramatic, unanimous vote Sunday night to "reestablish" the independence Lithuania lost 50 years ago, and its appeal to Gorbachev today to recognize their decision and end Soviet military service for all Lithuanians, the process of seceding from the Soviet Union is far from over.

Landsbergis, a non-Communist who was elected head of state by the parliament, said he now expects a prolonged period of difficult negotiations with Moscow. Dreams of creating a state on Lithuanian soil as prosperous and independent of Moscow as Finland are still distant. Not only must Vilnius get Moscow and the organs of Soviet power to agree in principle to Lithuanian independence, both sides must work out basic issues of economic and bilateral relations.

The unresolved questions are endless: Under what terms, and at what cost, if any, will banks, factories, collective farms, ports and other properties be turned over to the Republic of Lithuania? Do the Lithuanians owe Moscow reparations for industrial enterprises built since 1940—as Gorbachev asserted last week in reportedly demanding up to \$34 billion? Or does Moscow owe Lithuania far higher reparations for "economic damage" and for the deportation of tens of thousands of people to Siberia, as Lithuanian leaders suggest? Will a resident of Russia need a visa to visit Vilnius?

Moreover, will relations remain relatively calm and civil, or will Moscow, in its anger, apply an economic blockade against Lithuania? Some Lithuanian leaders, such as the new "temporary" Prime Minister Kazimera Prunskiene, say that such economic pressure has already begun with noticeable cutbacks in deliveries of fuel and other goods.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov, like other Moscow officials, continued to highlight what he called Lithuania's present economic "dependence." Economically, he told reporters today, "Lithuania cannot stand on its own feet, if only because it is a recipient of [petroleum] at state-subsidized prices." Nearly 97 percent of the fuel consumed in the republic is imported from elsewhere in the Soviet Union.



VYTAUTAS LANDSBERGIS
... "we all feel a little reborn"

He also assailed a U.S. State Department call for Moscow to respect the wishes of the Lithuanian people, saying: "Let that declaration be on the conscience of the American administration. If other countries begin trying to tell us what to do, it can only be considered as interference in the internal affairs of our country."

On an emotional level, Lithuanians point to the shortages of food and consumer goods and ask how they could be worse off. Despite Moscow's official stance praising its industrialization of Lithuania, peo-

ple here are convinced that if they had remained independent, the republic would be as prosperous today as Finland.

But the practical economic problems ahead for Lithuania and its 3.7 million people are profound, and they have been set out in detail by the republic's parliament's Committee for the Reestablishing of Lithuania's Independence.

Their report last month said it will be necessary to join natural gas pipelines from Western Europe and to establish at great expense independent systems of communications, railroads, sea and air transport. The committee said its main strategy would be to continue imports of fuel from the Soviet Union, introduce modern technology through joint ventures with Western firms and increase exports to the east of agricultural products, electronic and radio equipment and machine tools.

The committee added that Finland's experience in developing good economic relations with the Soviet Union in the late 1940s could serve as a model.

The panel's nine-part plan, published in *The Lithuanian Review* this week, includes as its last plank the "preparation of a plan for continued economic functioning and alternatives in the event of an economic blockade." But Lithuania, even while it poses an extraordinary challenge to Gorbachev, also is trying not to alienate him completely.

In an appeal to Gorbachev approved today and broadcast on Radio Vilnius, the Lithuanian legislators said the republic wanted "permanent good political and economic relations with the USSR," adding, "We ask you to regard this address to you as our official proposal to the U.S.S.R. to begin negotiations to settle all the issues connected with the restoration of an independent state of Lithuania, which has already been accomplished."

Lithuania's strategy at first was to establish the illegality of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the non-aggression accord between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany under which the Baltic states were incor-

porated into the Soviet Union in 1940. The next step was to elect a parliament that would declare the "reestablishment" of an independent Lithuania as a "full-fledged member of the world community of nations."

Landsbergis and his fellow leaders know that in most ways they are not a great deal more independent than they were last week. But they consider their parliamentary declarations a means of consistent, peaceful political and moral pressure on Moscow.

More than 5,000 young Lithuanian men have turned in their draft cards in the past several months, and many thousands more are expected to refuse to serve in the Red Army this spring. The Lithuanian parliament also said that it wants all Soviet army troops and KGB officers out of their territory.

Another step will be a steady withdrawal of participation in national Soviet politics. In Estonia and Latvia, as well as Lithuania, members of the Supreme Soviet, the standing legislature, and the Congress of Peoples Deputies, the supreme legislative body, are seriously considering avoiding taking part in the creation of any new Soviet laws and institutions because, as Estonian deputy Marju Lauristin said, "participating is a tacit admis-

sion that we intend to stay part of the Soviet state."

Only about half the Lithuanian delegation attended today's special session of the Congress of People's Deputies, and they spent much of their time trying to change their nameplate from the "Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania" to the new name declared Sunday, The Republic of Lithuania.

The Estonians have already established and elected deputies to an alternative parliament to the republic's Supreme Soviet. The republic's Congress, which met for the first time Sunday, is intended to serve as a kind of government-in-waiting for an independent Estonia.

[In Tallinn, the Congress demanded an "exact deadline for ending the occupation and illegal annexation of the republic of Estonia" as the first step toward restoring its independence, the Associated Press reported.

[Estonia has no need to declare independence, as Lithuania did Sunday, because it is already an independent, though occupied country, said Tunne Kelam, a leader of the movement to create the congress.

[The two-day session demanded that Moscow withdraw all Soviet troops and immediately cease KGB activity in Estonia.]